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DEPARTMENT FOR G/TIP

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [KFRD](#) [PREF](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S FIRST TIP VICTIM SHELTER: SECRETARY
POWELL PARTICIPATES IN SIGNING CEREMONY

REF: A. ANKARA 03705

[B](#). ANKARA 01233

[1](#)1. Summary: Secretary Powell and FM Gul witnessed the signing of a protocol that will lead to the opening of Turkey's first shelter for trafficking in persons victims later this month. The signing ceremony, which attracted significant attention and publicity, publicly committed the Turkish government and the Istanbul Municipality to support this initiative. Although a modest step in Turkey's fledgling efforts to combat TIP, the shelter and the enhanced cooperation between Turkish authorities and NGOs represent a sea change in official attitudes on this issue. USG pressure has helped focus GOT attention on its anti-TIP programs, but tight budgets and competing priorities will likely impede the long-term progress that can only come from substantial investments in training, assistance, and public education. End Summary.

TIP Shelter Signing Ceremony

[1](#)2. On June 29 Secretary Powell witnessed the signing of a protocol between the Istanbul Municipality and Turkish NGO Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF) setting the stage for the opening of Turkey's first-ever shelter for victims of trafficking in persons. The Secretary, in Istanbul for the NATO Summit, made remarks at the signing ceremony, along with Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul. The event put the Municipality's support for the shelter on the public record, as it committed itself to provide a property to house the program. The municipality's contribution, a result at least in part of USG pressure and subsequent MFA and Ministry of Interior intervention, marks an important milestone in GOT anti-trafficking protection efforts.

[1](#)3. The presence of the Secretary and FM Gul at the signing ceremony attracted widespread media attention (Ref A), and was an excellent opportunity for public education about the trafficking in persons issue in Turkey. The Secretary pointed out that the protection of human liberty and dignity is part of NATO's mandate, and that NATO countries had developed the first ever anti-trafficking policy by an Alliance. FM Gul stated that Turkey is committed to the worldwide effort against trafficking; Turkey's legal framework already reflects this and now the country is taking concrete measures to implement these laws. Efforts by the American-Turkish Council have resulted in contributions from American companies toward the shelter's operating costs, and two local representatives of Altria/Philip Morris were on hand to present a check for \$45,000 to HRDF. Municipality officials, HRDF board members, the Istanbul representative of the International Organization on Migration (IOM) and numerous journalists also attended the event.

GOT-NGO Anti-TIP Cooperation Improving

[1](#)4. The GOT (Ministry of Interior) signed agreements in the last several months with HRDF and IOM to cooperate on a number of anti-TIP efforts (Ref B, post's submission to 2004 TIP report). Turkish police, upon identifying potential TIP victims when carrying out raids, now contact HRDF and IOM so that these organizations can provide medical and legal assistance. IOM Istanbul rep Murat Kalkan told us recently that the police alerted them to 20 TIP cases in the first two months following conclusion of their agreement this spring (all involved Ukrainian and Moldovan women in Adana, Ankara, and Istanbul). HRDF Executive Director Demet Gural confirmed they are also enjoying good cooperation with police officials in this regard. To date, however, there has been no place for TIP victims to stay and await assistance, and too often victims have been forced to leave the country before receiving the help they need. According to Gural, the new shelter facility, due to open later this month, will be able to accommodate 12-15 women. The municipality has paid a year's rent in advance for the facility, which will be housed -- at least for its first year of existence -- in a duplex apartment in Istanbul. The municipality is also covering all utilities. HRDF will be seeking a larger, more permanent, state-owned property to house the shelter starting in its

second year of operation.

15. The shelter is partially furnished, and one of HRDF's founding members has donated additional furniture and kitchen appliances to meet its immediate needs. Embassy Ankara has organized a clothes and supplies drive that will provide additional resources to the shelter. HRDF's project coordinator, Dr. Muhtar Cokar, will work along with psychotherapist Serra Akkaya and legal advisor Hasan Kemal Elban in implementing the project. HRDF is currently recruiting for a full-time, tri-lingual (Turkish, Russian, Moldovan) "cultural mediator" who will live in the shelter and staff the shelter's hotline. The shelter will be equipped with security cameras, purchased with a portion of the funds contributed by Philip Morris. As soon as the cultural mediator is identified, the shelter will be open for business; HRDF staff estimates that all will be in place by the end of July.

Regional Efforts

16. On a separate note, HRDF is involved in a September conference on border trafficking of minors scheduled to take place in Edirne (on the Turkish border with Bulgaria). The conference is designed for Turkish and Bulgarian NGOs and law enforcement agencies, but HRDF is looking for funding to bring Moldovan participants as well. AMCONGEN Istanbul has been in touch with AMEMB Chisinau regarding possible funding sources. This type of regional cooperation among NGOs seems to be the norm for HRDF. When visiting HRDF in May, two visiting Moldovan NGO representatives were on their way back home via Istanbul after having been in Dubai assisting in the repatriation of a Moldovan TIP victim. From July 16-30, HRDF's Armenian NGO partner, Hope and Help, is due to visit Istanbul, Ankara, Trabzon, Hopa, Rize and Antalya. In Istanbul, Hope and Help will meet with Gural and AMCONGEN TIP officer. The NGO will then meet with MFA TIP officials in Ankara. At each of their stops, Hope and Help representatives have scheduled meetings with partner NGOs, Georgian and Russian Consulate officials, TIP officers from the Turkish National Police, and Armenian victims of trafficking.

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